

## Testimony of Lorrie McFarland

### **\*H.B. No. 7027 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2019, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.**

*February 23 2017 Appropriations Subcommittee on Health Public Hearing  
Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services, Regional Action Council Funding*

Senator Osten, Senator Formica, Representative Walker, Senator Gerratana, Senator Markley, Representative Dillon and members of the Appropriations Subcommittee, my name Lorrie McFarland and I am a resident of Seymour, CT. I am here today to strongly oppose the grave cuts to regional action councils that will decimate the current prevention network structure.

The Alliance for Prevention & Wellness formerly known as, the Greater Valley Substance Abuse Action Council partners with almost every entity in the communities they serve. They work to create linkages and partnerships to reduce substance abuse, suicide, and promote and improve mental health. We rely on their expertise and data driven planning that assists us in closing gaps in services and creating healthy communities.

In the past year they have provided hours of substance abuse education to Seymour High School and the school system with numerous trainings that has helped build expertise and skills in addressing the issues among students. For example they have provided Mental Health First Aid, suicide prevention, Drug Trends and Red Watch trainings to both adults and youth. In addition, they have provided consultation on curriculum and technical assistance in developing substance abuse education to our student population.

This Regional Action Council has collected student survey data from our 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students on substance use trends in our schools for the past 10 years.

If we did not have the Alliance for Prevention & Wellness in our community, we would not have localized data. They provide the student survey and regional data profiles that we rely on to leverage additional funding from both federal and state sources.

We urge you to reject the severe budget cuts to regional action councils and keep in place the current funding structure.

Respectfully Submitted,

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